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A P L E A
FOR THE MAINTENANCE IN ITS INTEGRITY
OF
DIOCESAN INSPECTION
IN
THE DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY.

A Letter

ADDRESSED TO
THE CANTERBURY DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION.

BY
B. F. SMITH,
DIOCESAN INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY.

LONDON :
WYMAN & SONS, 74-5, GREAT QUEEN STREET,
LINCOLN'S-INN FIELDS, W.C.

1874.

A L E T T E R,

ETC.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

Circumstances have forced on the Canterbury Diocesan Board of Education the necessity of reviewing their position in regard to Diocesan Inspection in this Diocese. And having been allowed to exercise some influence on their resolution to inaugurate the existing scheme in 1870, I am emboldened to state the considerations on which I trust the Board may be led to re-affirm it, so that it may take rank as an established institution of the Diocese.

Recon-
sideration
of Dio-
cesan in-
spection.

I venture to do this in writing for three reasons.

Reasons
for state-
ment in
writing.

1st. That the matter may be weighed by others besides those members of the Board who are able to take part in its deliberations.

2nd. Because the data on which the decision of the Board should rest are of a kind that require to be carefully weighed—*oculis submissa fidelibus*.

3rd. Because the discussion at the Board may at any time enter on matters so personal to myself as to preclude my taking any part in it.

The situation.

The circumstances which induce the Board to review the whole subject are these:—The permission granted a year ago to one Inspector, to devolve one-half of the visitation of the Schools in his district on a deputy, will expire with the current year, and unless any fresh arrangement be made he must then vacate his office. It is, at the same time, known that the other Inspector will then be in a similar position, unable personally to discharge more than half the visitation duties for which he made himself responsible; and it is natural that the Board should embrace the opportunity of carefully reviewing its whole position in regard to Diocesan Inspection.

System adopted in 1870.

The objects contemplated by the scheme of Diocesan Inspection, which the Board adopted in 1870, will be best stated in the words in which the proposal was then laid before it. It was—"to provide an annual religious Inspection, under Episcopal authority, of all Church Schools willing to receive

it, conducted by Inspectors of wide experience, who may act on a concerted plan, carry weight enough to give the key-note to the Teachers' work, and assist in harmonizing the duty they owe to the Church with that which they have undertaken to the state." This programme, however, has been since enlarged, so as to include an annual collective Examination in religious knowledge of Pupil Teachers and paid Monitors.

It will not be disputed that the system thus inaugurated has met with an almost universal welcome both from Managers and Teachers. In the western half of the Diocese it is not known that any School is closed against the Diocesan Inspector's visit; and in the eastern half the number of such cases is quite insignificant; and whatever imperfections may have been found in the manner of conducting the inspection they have happily not affected its acceptability. On this point I can hardly be mistaken, being able to contrast the present cordial welcome of the Diocesan Inspector, both by Managers and Teachers, as a valuable ally in their efforts to do justice to the religious interests of their scholars, with a former condition of things in which his visits were often simply tolerated, or submitted to out of deference to authority. It may also be safely affirmed that outside the circle of those

Its acceptance.

who had before taken interest in the work of the Diocesan Board of Education, a warm sympathy with its operations has sprung up, founded solely on personal experience of benefits received from the Diocesan Inspection maintained by the Board. And from a somewhat wide intercourse with those, whose schools would be affected by any substantial change, I am satisfied that I am but the mouthpiece of their wishes in pleading for the maintenance in its integrity of the Diocesan Inspection they have enjoyed: and if they could be reached, and it were necessary, they would be willing to enforce their petition by pecuniary support to the scheme.

Frequent
change of
Inspectors.

The only cause of dissatisfaction with the system as it has been hitherto administered (barring the economical one), which has reached my ears, is the frequent change of Inspectors. That, however, is inevitable so long as the salaries which the Board is able to offer, cannot compete with even a small preferment. And the temptation to exchange an uncertain for a permanent field of duty will manifestly increase, the oftener the whole position of inspection comes up for discussion or re-settlement. In the meanwhile the Board may be congratulated on the services that have been rendered it even though the tenures of office have proved but too short.

It is now, however, suggested in the interests of economy, that the existing system should be modified.

Suggestions for modification of scheme.

And first it is naturally asked whether the Diocesan Inspector's visits might not be made at longer intervals than a year. The reply is, that the abandonment of *annual* inspections would be a most fatal step backward. It would imperil the acceptance of Diocesan Inspection in many schools. Where it continued to be accepted, it would be less acceptable, coming at varying periods of the Government year. It would lose much of its influence over the regulation of the annual course of the religious studies. It would leave some Government years clear of any visit of Diocesan Inspection. It would compete, at increased disadvantage, with the annual inspection in secular subjects. In comparing the influence exerted by the present annual, and by the former biennial or triennial visitations of the Diocesan Inspector, it is impossible not to observe that since Diocesan Inspection has become a fixed event in the School year, it has, for the first time, come to be regarded as a settled institution; from which position it would be suicidal in the Church to depose it.

Must Inspectors be annual?

It is next asked whether, if the present *annual* Diocesan Inspection be indispensable, it might not be partly or wholly carried on

Must Inspectors be paid?

by volunteers. The answer is, that such a retrograde step would discredit the scheme in the eyes of Teachers and Managers, whose confidence is essential to its working; and the return to an instrumentality which the Board had long since abandoned, would at once shut the doors of the best schools against Diocesan Inspection. But could the Board itself reasonably rely on voluntary labours? It has been well said that the death-knell of Volunteer Inspection, on any extended scale, was sounded by the Education Act, when nearly a month's notice was required for every Visit of Inspection. It is to be remembered also that, four years ago, nearly every other Diocese was entirely dependent on Volunteer Inspection; but that in the interval all but four, comprising nine-tenths of the population of England, have followed the lead of the Diocese of Canterbury, by appointing paid Inspectors, though in six of these Dioceses voluntary aid is still employed. But in the face of this general movement no Diocese can revert to the abandoned position without diminishing the influence of its Inspection with the Teachers. And, indeed, in this matter the Canterbury Diocesan Board is dealing with Church interests beyond its own borders. For if it retreats from the forward position deliberately taken up after the Education

Act passed, it will strike panic into those Dioceses which have followed its lead; and this advanced post of Church Education will be deemed untenable, when the most adventurous have retreated from it. If it is only a question of money whether Diocesan Inspection shall become a permanent institution in England, it would be deplorable that a Diocese, so favourably situated as that of Canterbury for obtaining the necessary funds, should proclaim its inability to maintain it in full efficiency.

It has been suggested that the system adopted in the Diocese of Carlisle, of a simultaneous examination on paper of the elder scholars, might partly or wholly supersede the present plan of an annual visitation of schools. But valuable as the system might be as an adjunct, it would be no effective substitute for a Diocesan Inspector's visit. It would only test the acquirements of a limited and selected portion of a school,—and that through the difficult medium of composition; and then the result would be no criterion of the whole work done in the school, and, indeed might be traceable to other sources, as the teaching of the Clergyman, or of the Sunday School. Large portions of every school would still be left untested. And the impetus now given to the machinery of daily religious instruction

Can written examination be substituted?

by the sympathetic contact of the Inspector with the Teacher, during the annual examination of the school, would be wholly lost, and could be made up for by no simultaneous examination and classification of a few picked scholars.

The conclusion, therefore, seems to me inevitable, that if Diocesan Inspection is to be kept up in thorough efficiency, a *visit of Inspection* must continue to be offered *annually*, by a *paid Inspector*, to *every school willing to receive it*.

Will one
Inspector
suffice?

It may next be asked whether, granting this, the Inspection of the Diocese might not be accomplished by one Inspector instead of two. The reply is, that the number of available days in the year in this Diocese does not suffice for the visitation by one Inspector of all the schools willing to receive him, which may be reckoned to exceed 550. The utmost that he could accomplish would be to visit 400 schools, working all his time; and, reckoning the incidental interruptions which in practice occur, it is doubtful whether he would average more than 350 a year. Besides, the examination of Pupil Teachers is now estimated to occupy two Inspectors closely for a month. So that there is no possibility of a single Inspector, however active, being able efficiently to overtake the whole work of the Diocese. The incidental

advantages of employing two Inspectors, are obvious—for purposes of deliberation—for the handing down of traditions when a vacancy occurs,—and for better consulting the convenience of schools by making the most of the more favourable seasons in the year for Inspection. Indeed there seems no objection to subdivision so long as the experience of each Inspector is sufficiently wide and varied to secure him against any narrowness of view.

But the fatal objection to the present system is, in some minds, its unnecessary costliness, and, in others, the presumed inability of the Board, with its present funds, to support it, whether extravagant or not.

Is the present system too costly?

As to its costliness, Diocesan Inspection has been carried on for the past three years at a cost of £450, with an additional charge for printing and issuing circulars, which has not exceeded £20. This is a provision of 16s. 2d. for the inspection of each School open to inspection, to say nothing of the examination of Pupil Teachers. From returns made by ten Dioceses it is found that they provide for the visitation of 5,050 schools at an average cost of £1. 2s. 11d. a school, ranging from 19s. 7d. per school in St. David's up to £1. 19s. in Durham. It may be replied that it is not at all certain that these

charges can continue to be met. But that does not effect the question of what is the reasonable cost of making provision for such objects. Again, the average cost of the actual inspection of each school visited, calculated from 5,946 schools visited in 1873 in fifteen Dioceses of England and Wales, amounts to £1. 6s. 9d. whilst £1. 2s. 11d. was the cost in the Diocese of Canterbury. At least, then, this Diocese both provides for, and does its work cheaply.

Can present system be afforded?

Still it is said that, whether comparatively costly or not, the present outlay on Diocesan Inspection is beyond the means at the disposal of the Board. But it is to be observed that the estimate of income on which the Board undertook the cost of the present system four years ago has not been falsified by the event. An additional outlay of £250 a year on this object was then incurred on the faith of its being somewhat more than met by the proceeds of a Biennial Letter from the Archbishop. The average annual yield of this appeal in the three years that have since elapsed, has been £326. 12s. 3d., and these annual sums have progressively increased. The income of the Board from collections in churches under the Archbishop's Letter was:—

	£.	s.	d.
In 1871	296	18	8
1872	307	14	4
1873	375	3	10
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Average	£326	12	3
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In the meanwhile the income from Subscriptions and Donations has undoubtedly diminished, though not progressively. It was

	£.	s.	d.
In 1871	454	17	9
1872	712	8	7
1873	483	13	8
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Average	£550	6	8
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It is obvious that subscriptions cannot be maintained at their level without a more organized effort than has yet been attempted to fill up the gaps caused by death and removal. But it must be insisted on that even at the lower level of subscriptions of 1873, the additional source of income opened up by the Archbishop's Letter both paid for the additional expenditure on inspection (£250), which it was granted to provide for, and filled up the gap in the subscriptions besides.

But it is further contended that, with the present income of the Society, the annual

Standing charges.

sum of £450 for Diocesan Inspection is not now available after meeting the necessary payments to which the Board stands pledged, so as to leave any margin adequately to deal with the demands for School building.

First as to these standing charges. They have been as follows:—

	Average of last 3 years.				1873.		
	£.	s.	d.	...	£.	s.	d.
Monitors	70	10	0	...	57	0	0
Evening Schools	13	5	2	...	7	7	0
Training	10	13	4	...	14	0	0
Prize Scheme	12	16	3	...	10	12	6
Architect's expenses	9	8	6	...	8	2	0
Printing, &c., and expenses							
	77	12	0	...	95	19	8
	<hr/> £194 5 3 <hr/>				<hr/> £193 1 2 <hr/>		

It may fairly be concluded, therefore, that the annual expenditure on these objects, if maintained at its present level, would not exceed £200. If this be deducted from the average permanent sources of income of the Board, the available balance is £676, or £658 if deducted from last year's income. And an annual charge of £450 for inspection would thus leave quite £200 a year available for building and other objects which the Board

may take in hand. But it must be remembered that of these regular expenses the two first,—that for monitors and evening schools,—might almost by common consent be dropped without any loss to religious education; these grants having survived their original usefulness. So that at least a balance of £250 on last year's income would then remain after £450 had been devoted to inspection.

If it be contended that this balance is not sufficient to enable the Society to make the necessary grants for building and enlarging schools, it must be remembered that we are fast approaching the time when final orders from the Education Department will expire, and insufficient accommodation will have to be supplied by rate. There will then be no necessity for building except to meet increase of population; and that again may be expected chiefly in the larger towns, where School Boards are established, by whom without doubt any additional accommodation will be provided. And thus building grants, which have hitherto absorbed the greater part of the Society's funds, will probably soon fall to an insignificant sum.

Even if it were a question whether these should be curtailed, rather than the efficiency of Diocesan Inspection imperilled, there would

Will it
leave
enough for
school
building?

Which
should
take pre-
cedence?

surely be no hesitation in choosing between grants spent on buildings—for which there is no security but that they may in a few months cease to answer the objects for which the Society contributed to them, through the schools being handed over to School Boards—and the maintenance in every Church School of the efficient religious teaching for the sake of which it is voluntarily maintained. But it is not necessary to curtail either. To meet the immediate demands of the short remainder of the time for building, there still remains a considerable balance of the funds specially contributed to meet this emergency.

Prime im-
portance of
Diocesan
Inspection.

With these altered prospects of Church Education, the Board may rather be congratulated on having undertaken a branch of work, the importance of which is obvious to every Churchman, which may occupy the void in its programme when school-building becomes a thing of the past. Indeed, what other object remains to the Board, at all adequate to the elaborate machinery which it has called into being, and which it has hitherto so usefully employed? School accommodation completed, what remains as a plea on which to urge the laity to support the Society, but the maintenance of Diocesan Inspection? On this object the Board may now well concentrate its energies, and to it

devote the major part of its funds. For in this field the immediate battle of Religious Education will be fought. Nothing will tend to preserve the existing Church Schools on their present footing, more than a system of inspection which is found to promote efficiency in their religious instruction. Whereas, if this be allowed to decline, through any withdrawal or exclusion of an effective Diocesan Inspection, the question will infallibly be asked, and will admit but of one answer,—Why should we make sacrifices to maintain by subscriptions schools that are not known to answer their special religious ends? Why not at once save ourselves this cost and trouble, and hand them over to School Boards?

In one other direction the present status of Diocesan Inspection is menaced, but it may be hoped not very seriously. The Inspectors have hitherto been appointed by the Archbishop, and they have been responsible and have reported to the Archbishop, through whom they have always communicated with the Board. The nomination, at least, it is now proposed to transfer to the Board; and with that would necessarily be transferred the power of control and of dismissal. Considering that the Board, meeting in different parts of the Diocese, is of necessity but a fortuitous

Should Inspector be appointed by Board?

concourse of atoms, whose views of persons and policy must be variable, such a change, it is to be feared, would undesirably limit the class of persons willing to engage in the work of Diocesan Inspection. It would diminish the weight of authority which the Inspector as the Archbishop's officer now enjoys. It might easily reduce the number of the schools to which he found access. It would hamper his freedom of action, if he were responsible to a popular body for each detail of his administration. The Board is certain always to be able to exercise its due amount of influence, through its individual members, in any nomination of an Inspector. Whilst a body, so large and so fluctuating as the Board, would act at great disadvantage in deciding between rival applicants, even if every appointment made by a public body was not liable to degenerate into a question of canvassing.

Summary
of points
at issue.

If, in reviewing the whole subject of Diocesan Inspection, the pleas I have urged for its maintenance in its integrity recommend themselves to the Board, it will do well to reaffirm the main principles of the scheme adopted in 1870; and resolve:

1. That Diocesan Inspection shall be permanently maintained on its present basis;
2. That it shall continue to be annual;
3. That it shall continue to be paid;

4. That it shall continue to be conducted by more than one Inspector ;

5. That those Inspectors shall continue to be appointed by the Archbishop, to be responsible, and to report to him ;

6. That they shall continue to hold a collective examination annually for the Pupil Teachers and paid Monitors.

Two suggestions seem to flow from the foregoing considerations, tending to the improvement of the financial position of the Board.

Sug-
gestions.

1. That the Board should discontinue its grants to Monitors and Evening Schools.

2. That it should appoint a Financial Secretary to watch over the state of the Funds, the obligations, and grants of the Board ; to enlist from time to time new Subscribers ; and to correspond with the Clergy on the subject of collections in Churches under the Pastoral Letter of the Archbishop.

I trust that a long and intimate connection with the practical work of inspection may be thought sufficient apology for obtruding on the Members of the Board at so great a length the views which my official experience has led me to take. And I am confident that the Board will not allow any slight surviving interest I may personally have in its decision to prejudice the cause which I have feebly,

but in all sincerity, advocated ; which is above all personal considerations, because it touches so closely the highest interests of the Diocese and of the Church at large.

I am,

My Lords and Gentlemen,

&c., &c., &c.,

B. F. SMITH.

CRAYFORD RECTORY,

Sept. 24th, 1874.







